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General Assembly

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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 287th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 31 August 2005, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Badji ..... (Senegal)

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05-47670 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Report by the Chairman on developments since the previous meeting

2. **The Chairman** said that on 6 May 2005 the Bureau of the Committee had briefed Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on its recent activities. The Under-Secretary-General had said that he would be paying close attention to the Committee's activities and asked that the Committee not lose sight of the overall needs of the Department for Political Affairs, especially within the context of the debate on the Secretary-General's reform proposals and the decisions emanating from that process.

3. On 5 August 2005, Ms. Somaia Barghouti, Observer for Palestine, had met with Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, in order to discuss cooperation between the Committee and the Department of Public Information. On 30 August 2005 the Bureau had issued a statement to the effect that Israel's recent removal of 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank was a promising step that could revive negotiations within the framework of the Road Map and move forward the peace process. In the statement the Bureau also noted that the Palestinian Authority had fully demonstrated its ability to control the situation throughout the current critical period, especially in the area of security, and expressed the hope that the positive momentum gained as a result of the removal of settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank would be followed by similar steps in the rest of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and breathe new life into the political process, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights.

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

4. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for Palestine) said that, despite its reservations about the unilateral nature of Israel's actions, the Palestinian Authority welcomed the redeployment of the Israeli army and the removal of the illegal Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip as a positive step towards a peaceful and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. The Palestinian Authority had been working hard to coordinate its actions with the Israeli Government in an effort to resolve the issues arising from Israel's withdrawal, but Israel had not reciprocated and had not focused on the search for solutions based on international law.

5. Although agreement had been reached on a number of issues, many remained unresolved, and a political process must be launched to that end. In that context, the Palestinian Authority wished to reconfirm its sovereignty over the disputed territory and the geographical unity of its country, including the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israeli forces should withdraw completely from the Gaza Strip, and the legal status of the Gaza Strip must remain unchanged in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Hague Convention of 1907.

6. Furthermore, it was essential to lay down the economic and financial conditions required to facilitate the political process. In that regard, the Palestinian Authority welcomed the pledges of support made by the Group of Eight countries and urged that such support be provided as soon as possible. The removal of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which should be seen as a step forward in the implementation of international law, should be continued until all the settlements were removed. The process of withdrawing troops and removing settlements should be completed as soon as possible, along with all other pending issues relating to those actions, and should not obstruct the next stage of the political process. The Palestinian Authority would continue to negotiate in order to reach a rapid solution to those issues.

7. Future political actions must be implemented on a unilateral basis and all solutions should be negotiated solutions, because unilateral actions undermined the peace process and the implementation of the Road Map.

and frustrated the search for a lasting solution. The two-State solution must be based on the withdrawal of Israelis from the territories occupied in 1967, and the status of the 1949 armistice line must be reaffirmed. The solution of the Palestinian question was an essential prerequisite for achieving stability in the Middle East and for making progress in combating terrorism. The construction of the wall was contrary to international law and must be halted immediately. The illegality of settlements in Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, must be reaffirmed. The Palestinian Authority wished to reaffirm the illegality of the Israeli Government's actions in East Jerusalem, including the construction of the separation wall and the separation of East Jerusalem from the West Bank. Good-faith negotiations would require rapid decisions.

8. The Palestinian Authority would do everything in its power to ensure a return to stability and the Israeli Government, for its part, must end construction of the wall, halt the construction of further settlements, and release all Palestinian prisoners. The four major issues that must be resolved in order to achieve a lasting solution were the issues of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, the Israeli settlements, and borders. Neither party must take measures that were counter to the achievement of a lasting solution. The Palestinian Authority did not wish the border issue to be reopened.

9. Finally, in order to implement the commitments made at the 8 February 2005 Sharm Al-Sheikh summit, the Quartet must draft a new agenda for implementing the proposed solutions to the question of Palestine and establish a monitoring mechanism, as soon as possible, in accordance with the Road Map. Furthermore, active negotiations should take place between the two parties in order to ensure the establishment of a transitional mechanism, including the possibility of convening an international conference.

10. **The Chairman** said that the Observer for Palestine had emphasized the essential elements for a settlement of the Palestinian question. The Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people should be congratulated for the responsible approach they had taken during the current difficult situation. They had demonstrated their ability to work together and to take responsibility for their own future.

11. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the statement of the Observer for Palestine deserved the Committee's closest attention, particularly as it had clarified the Palestinian position for the next phase of the peace process. The withdrawal of the Israelis from any occupied territory was a positive step towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement. His Government welcomed the withdrawal of the Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip and hoped to see further Israeli withdrawals so that the entire territory could be restored to the Palestinian people.

12. At the same time, however, his Government wished to draw the attention of the Committee and of the international community to the fact that many Israeli settlers had been moved, not to Israel, but to other occupied territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan. His Government would do its utmost to ensure that those settlements did not remain. Israel should withdraw from all occupied territories and cease the establishment and expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the Syrian Golan, and should halt construction of the separation wall.

13. The upcoming sixtieth session of the General Assembly would provide an opportunity for certain parties to launch an assault on the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly itself and by the Committee. However, his delegation would keep the Committee informed of all such actions, and was confident that the membership of the United Nations would resist them. The Palestinian question must be resolved as a matter of urgency, but in a manner that guaranteed a just and comprehensive solution, as well as the historic and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

14. **The Chairman** said that the final point made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic was particularly important and would help to heighten the Committee's vigilance.

Report by the Vice-Chairman on his attendance at the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Middle East Peace, 12 and 13 July 2005, Paris

15. **Mr. Farhâdi** (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman, said that the Conference, which had been held at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), had brought together representatives of civil society organizations from different parts of the world to mobilize and coordinate new initiatives on the question of Palestine. There had been over 170 participants,

including representatives of 48 civil society organizations and 41 Governments.

16. The Conference had been held within a week of the one-year anniversary of the issuance of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, of 9 July 2004, on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Despite the efforts of the international community, the Government of Israel had not halted construction of the wall; indeed, it had approved new sections of the wall, which would eventually incorporate the large settlements around East Jerusalem, on the Israeli side. Israel's continued establishment and expansion of its settlements were changing the demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; as a result, the socio-economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had worsened, preventing the Palestinian people from exercising their inalienable rights and undermining the vision of a two-State solution. It was in that context that the Committee had decided to keep the focus of the international community on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and highlight the significance of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

17. At the final plenary meeting, Conference participants had adopted a plan of action which urged international, national and regional movements and organizations to support the call of Palestinian civil society for a global campaign of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions against business entities that profited from, and contributed to the Israeli occupation, aimed at applying pressure on Israel to end the occupation and fully comply with international law and with all relevant United Nations resolutions. The Steering Committee of the Conference had requested the Committee to help facilitate the implementation of the commitments made by the Conference.

18. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) welcomed the plan of action, which would help define the position of the international community with regard to the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

19. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to take note of the report.

20. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 October 2005

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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 288th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 5 October 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Badji ..... (Senegal)

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05-53695 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

2. **The Chairman** welcomed the new Permanent Observer for Palestine, Mr. Mansour, to the Committee. He also informed the Committee that, as part of the 2005 training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority, two officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be working with the Division for Palestinian Rights for the duration of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

3. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that Palestine viewed the dismantling of illegal Israeli settlements and the pullout of the Israeli occupying forces from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank as an important step forward in efforts to reverse Israel's colonization of Palestinian territory. However, the pullout had been planned and executed unilaterally without consideration for Palestinian concerns and interests and many critical issues remained unresolved. To ensure that living conditions in Gaza improved and to translate Israel's unilateral action into a positive and constructive development, it was essential to reach agreement on all outstanding issues, including the need to ensure freedom of movement and a permanent link between the West Bank and Gaza.

4. Agreement must also be reached on how to move forward. The Sharm el-Sheikh understandings must be implemented without delay. Commitments under the road map must be honoured and dialogue and negotiations on final status issues must be resumed immediately. The international community should address the issue of ongoing illegal settlement activities and the continued construction of the separation wall by the occupying Power with a view to achieving their definitive cessation, because if Israel was allowed to continue with those activities, the two-State solution and the peace process as a whole would have little chance of succeeding.

5. During the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, Palestine would be focusing on a number of priorities, including the package of resolutions on the question of Palestine adopted annually by the General Assembly, which reflected the long-standing position of the international community on various aspects of the situation and were also indicative of the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it was completely resolved. Palestine would continue to assert the need for Israel to respect and implement United Nations resolutions and would work with its friends and partners to reaffirm the essential principles contained in those resolutions and to increase support for them.

6. In view of Israel's continued violations of its obligations under the road map, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Palestine would work for the implementation of the Arab Ministers' decision to resume the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly with a view to adopting coercive measures to enforce a complete cessation of settlement and construction activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Security Council should remain seized of the question of Palestine and should continue to monitor the situation on the ground by means of the monthly briefings. A political resolution by the Council might be possible in the context of the proposed Russian conference.

7. Lastly, in the context of the reform of the United Nations and the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, Palestine took the view that mandates that were regularly submitted to the General Assembly, including mandates and programmes relating to the question of Palestine, should not be subject to review by the Secretariat, since the very fact that they were submitted for renewal on an annual or biennial basis meant that they were thoroughly reviewed by Member States. Palestine would be following closely efforts to establish a Human Rights Council and a Peacebuilding Commission and was particularly interested in how the latter might contribute to future peacebuilding efforts in the Middle East.

Consideration of the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2005/CRP.2)

8. **Mr. Camilleri** (Rapporteur) introduced the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/2005/CRP.2), which covered the work of the Committee since October 2004. The draft report outlined the Committee's objectives and its general perspective on the events of the previous year. It summarized the action taken by the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information and also reviewed, in some detail, the situation on the ground. Paragraphs 70 to 76 of the draft report contained the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee. In accordance with established practice, the Secretariat would continue to update the draft report, in consultation with the Rapporteur and as necessary, in order to reflect any new developments that might take place before it was forwarded to the General Assembly.

9. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft report for submission to the General Assembly.

10. *It was so decided.*

11. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) commended the draft report, which dealt accurately and sensitively with a number of delicate issues. He was confident that the Committee would continue to discharge its responsibilities with regard to the political situation as it unfolded in Palestine. It was to be hoped that the Palestinian people would move progressively closer to accomplishing their goal of an end to the Israeli occupation of lands occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, so that Palestine could sit in the General Assembly not as an observer but as an independent, equal Member State.

Other matters

12. **Mr. Hamidon Ali** (Malaysia), reporting to the Committee in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement had, at their annual meeting in New York on 20 September 2005, expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people and emphasized the need for the members of the Quartet to ensure the full implementation of the road map for the viable creation of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine. Meanwhile, the Non-Aligned Movement Committee on Palestine, whose members were the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Palestine, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, had met on 19 September to discuss the latest developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially the continuing construction of the separation wall, the recent Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the illegal construction of new settlements in the occupied territories and refugees' right of return. The Ministers had agreed to call on the international community and the Quartet to make every effort to salvage the road map; to call on Israel to comply with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; and to coordinate the Non-Aligned Movement's position with regard to the proposed convening by Switzerland of the Diplomatic Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in connection with the construction of the wall, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution ES-10/15.

13. The ministerial delegation on Palestine, comprising the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia (as Chairman), Algeria, Cuba, India, Palestine and South Africa, had held a meeting with members of the Quartet and with permanent members of the Security Council. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs had also met with their counterparts from China, France and the Russian Federation, and with the Secretary-General, who had all expressed their commitment to the road map and, in response to the concerns expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement, had said that Israel's withdrawal from Gaza had been a positive move but that they would encourage Israel to make further concessions on, inter alia, the withdrawal of illegal settlers and of Israeli forces from all the occupied territories and to dismantle both the wall and the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

14. Lastly, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Movement Troika, represented by Cuba, Malaysia and South Africa, had met their Troika counterparts from the European Union, represented by Austria, the United Kingdom, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, in order to convey to them the concerns of the Non-Aligned Movement regarding the Middle East peace process.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.

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General Assembly

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21 November 2005

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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 289th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 10 November 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Badji ..... (Senegal)

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05-59726 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Expression of sympathy in connection with recent tragic events in Amman, Jordan

1. **The Chairman**, on behalf of all the members of the Committee, expressed sympathy to the Government and people of Jordan in connection with the recent tragic events in Amman.

Tribute to the memory of Mr. Yasser Arafat, former Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and former President of the Palestinian National Authority

2. **The Chairman**, on behalf of all the members of the Committee, paid a tribute to the memory of Mr. Yasser Arafat on the eve of the first anniversary of his death.

Adoption of the agenda

3. *The agenda was adopted.*

Thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975

4. **The Chairman**, delivering a statement by the Bureau of the Committee, said that the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Committee was not a cause for celebration but rather an opportunity to reflect upon decades of failed efforts to resolve the question of Palestine. It was also a reminder that the Committee must redouble its efforts to bring about a just solution.

5. It was on 10 November 1975 that the General Assembly had adopted resolution 3376 (XXX) establishing the Committee and outlining its mandate. The Assembly had expressed its deep concern that no just solution to the problem of Palestine had yet been achieved and had recognized that the problem continued to endanger international peace and security. It had reaffirmed that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people included the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and property. The Committee remained the only intergovernmental body in the entire United Nations family devoted exclusively to political aspects of the question of Palestine.

6. In a report to the Security Council in June 1976, the Committee had affirmed that the question of Palestine was at the heart of the Middle East problem and that no solution could be envisaged without taking fully into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. It had urged the Council to promote action for a just solution, using all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations. The Committee's recommendations had included a two-phase plan for the return of Palestinians; a timetable for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories by 1 June 1977, with the provision, if necessary, of temporary peacekeeping forces; an end to the establishment of settlements; recognition by Israel of the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, to the occupied territories pending withdrawal; and endorsement of the inherent right of Palestinians to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee had also endorsed the view that the United Nations, which had a historical responsibility towards the Palestinian people, should render to the Palestinian authorities the necessary economic and technical assistance for the development of the new Palestinian State. The Committee's original recommendations had not been adopted by the Security Council and had not been implemented. They had, however, been endorsed by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly.

7. The Committee's programme of work had been gradually expanded. With the support of the Division for Palestinian Rights, it had come to include a variety of activities, such as the convening of international meetings, a publications programme, the development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), the establishment of cooperation with a wide network of civil society organizations, and the organization of an annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian National Authority. The Committee had always advocated a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine in accordance with international law. It had welcomed the Middle East peace process initiated in 1991 at the Madrid Peace Conference and had actively encouraged the implementation of the Oslo Accords. It had given its full support to the road map introduced

by the Quartet with a view to fulfilling the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. The Committee continued to promote the full exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to mobilize international assistance for, and solidarity with, the Palestinian people.

8. In September 2005, the Committee had expressed the view that the removal of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip were promising steps which might restart the stalled peace process. It had expressed the hope that similar steps would follow in the rest of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and breathe new life into the peace process. Yet the Committee continued to voice its concern about the occupying Power's actions on the ground, including the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the accelerated construction of the illegal wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Committee reminded Israel that such activities contravened international law, as spelled out in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and it called upon all Governments to fulfil their obligations under international law and take the necessary steps to ensure compliance by Israel with its international obligations.

9. In accordance with its mandate from the General Assembly, the Committee remained committed to working hard to help the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights. It would continue to endeavour to enhance international awareness of the question of Palestine and thus contribute to maintaining the permanent responsibility of the United Nations in that regard. On behalf of the Committee, the Bureau thanked all the individuals and organizations which had supported the Committee in its quest for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. Over the past 30 years their commitment, political activism and initiatives had strengthened the efforts of the United Nations and of the Committee.

10. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine), delivering a message from Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian National Authority, said that the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Committee was an occasion to remember the constant commitment of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine. It was also, however, an occasion marked with sadness by the tragedy of the Palestinian people, which had been displaced from its homeland more than half a century earlier and was still unable to exercise its inalienable human rights.

11. The United Nations had striven to keep the international community focused on the question of Palestine in order to bring an end to the human rights violations endured by the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to the Israeli occupation. The permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine had been unequivocally reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion. It should be remembered that, in resolution 3376 (XXX), the General Assembly had mandated the Committee to recommend a programme to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights. In its very first report, the Committee had affirmed that the question of Palestine was at the core of the Middle East problem and that any solution must take fully into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It had also called for an end to the establishment of illegal settlements by the occupying Power and had urged Israel to accept the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

12. Regrettably, the problems initially highlighted by the Committee had intensified with the passage of time. The Palestinian people was still denied its human rights, and Israel had continued with its settlements, the wall, the siege of East Jerusalem, the imprisonment of thousands of civilians, the confiscation and destruction of land and property, and restrictions on movement. The international community must make a serious effort to uphold international law in order to create an environment conducive to a just and peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine.

13. The current meeting was taking place on the eve of the first anniversary of the death of former President Yasser Arafat, who had first come to the General Assembly in 1974 as the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to urge the international community to support the Palestinian people. The Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority renewed that call. The Committee's mandate remained valid, and all Member States must cooperate with it in its programme of work. The

Palestinian people and its leaders paid a tribute to the Committee and to the Division for Palestinian Rights for their efforts to achieve a just and peaceful settlement on the basis of two States living side by side in peace and security within the 1967 borders.

14. The day when the Committee finally discharged its mandate would be the day on which the Palestinian people achieved the exercise of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination in an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

15. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Observer for Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that 30 years after the establishment of the Committee the world was still witnessing the suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and the denial of the exercise of its inalienable rights, including the right to found an independent State. Regrettably, despite Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and some settlements in the West Bank, there had been no positive progress in terms of enabling the Palestinian National Authority to exercise its responsibilities in the Palestinian territories. The situation of the Palestinian people had not changed in the areas from which Israel had withdrawn. The policy of closures continued, as did the construction of the illegal wall, and Israel was still pursuing its policy of assassinating Palestinian activists. It was also continuing to establish settlements on Palestinian territory in the West Bank, in contravention of its international obligations.

16. In spite of the Committee's efforts and the resolutions adopted every year by the General Assembly reaffirming the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and demanding Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, the international community remained unable to end a bitter era of conflict. In that context, the Committee's work remained vital and deserved unconditional support; the Committee must be provided with the accurate information which it needed to fulfil its mandate. The Arab Group would object to any attempt to use the reform of United Nations as a pretext for eliminating the Committee or restricting its activities.

17. The Arab Group reaffirmed its full support for the Committee, which must continue its efforts until the Palestinian people could truly exercise its rights and establish its own independent Palestinian State. It also reaffirmed its support for all the international efforts to achieve the establishment of such a State through the honest implementation of the road map. Until that objective was obtained, Israel must fulfil its obligations as occupying Power, in particular the obligation to improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people and refrain from practices harmful to the exercise of its rights.

18. **Mr. Wali** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that ever since its establishment the Committee had made a tremendous contribution to the peace process in the Middle East. Africa shared the Committee's aspiration for the region; the Organization of African Unity, and now the African Union, had adopted several resolutions in support of the rights of the Palestinian people. The demands of the Palestinian people for the exercise of its inalienable rights, including the right to establish an independent State, were legitimate.

19. The African Group urged the international community to support an internationally promoted solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine on the basis of the resolutions of the Security Council, the Arab peace initiative and the road map. It called on both sides to commit themselves to the implementation of the road map, including the total withdrawal of Israeli forces, the release of prisoners, and an end to the establishment of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. The African Group commended the practical and courageous steps taken by the Palestinian leadership and appealed to the international community and the Quartet to provide it with the necessary political and financial support and to take steps to reinvigorate the negotiations in order to salvage the peace process.

20. **Mr. Hassan** (Observer for Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, said that the Conference strongly condemned the heinous terrorist acts perpetrated in Amman. The Palestinian people had endured more than 50 years of occupation and suffering. Regrettably, as the Committee marked the thirtieth anniversary of its establishment, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to deteriorate. There had been an escalation of hostilities and a worsening of the barbarous and inhuman acts committed by the occupying Israeli forces.

21. The Organization of the Islamic Conference appreciated the Committee's work and the positions of

principle it had adopted, which reinforced the struggle of the Palestinian people to secure its inalienable rights. In accordance with United Nations resolutions and international law, which Israel continued to defy, the Organization had a permanent responsibility to the Palestinian people. The Committee, for its part, had been instructed by the General Assembly to recommend a programme of implementation, designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights. As the Committee's annual reports to the Assembly demonstrated, that goal was far from being achieved. Israel was continuing its efforts to put an end to the Palestinian struggle. The construction of the expansionist wall went on, in defiance of the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and Israel was pursuing its attempts to transform Jerusalem into a Jewish city through the suppression of its Arab Muslim character and the seizure of the surrounding agricultural land. Against that background, it was imperative for the Committee to resist any efforts to undermine it. It must pursue its work until the Israeli occupation ended and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were restored.

22. **Mr. Camilleri** (Malta) said that the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) was a sad reminder that the task assigned to the Committee had yet to be fulfilled. However, it was also an opportunity to reaffirm the fundamental values and principles through which the United Nations approached the question of Palestine: the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law. In that spirit, the Committee had welcomed the peace process initiated in Madrid, encouraged the implementation of the Oslo Accords and supported all efforts to halt the violence and achieve the resumption of negotiations with a view to ending the Israeli occupation and resolving the question of Palestine in all its aspects.

23. Important elements of the Committee's work included its role in organizing meetings and conferences on issues related to Palestine and its strong and effective working relations with non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and the media. Through its interaction with civil society, it had established an extensive network of contacts that covered many countries, including Israel. The Committee also interacted with key regional organizations, among them the European Union, the African Union, the Arab League and the Non-Aligned Movement. The Division for Palestinian Rights had made a valuable contribution to the Committee's work, inter alia through the preparation of reports and publications, the establishment of a training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority, and the development of the web-based United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

24. Malta was a founding member of the Committee and had provided its Rapporteur since its establishment. Its participation in the Committee was inspired by certain fundamental beliefs. First, it considered that the United Nations had a permanent responsibility to the Palestinian people. Second, it was firmly convinced that a just, comprehensive and durable solution to the question of Palestine could be achieved only through peaceful means, and, it believed that, while it was for the parties themselves to negotiate a settlement, the international community must support them in taking bold, and often difficult, decisions. Third, his Government was also concerned about the impact of the situation with respect to Palestine on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean and considered that, through its membership of the European Union, Malta would be able to play a greater role in that regard.

25. Lastly, he reaffirmed the Committee's noble objectives and expressed the hope that they would be achieved in the foreseeable future.

26. **Mr. Hamidon Ali** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, condemned the terrorist attacks in Amman. Since its establishment in 1975, the Committee had made a significant contribution to the Palestinian cause. In particular, it had helped to underscore that a solution to the question of Palestine could be achieved only with the complete restoration of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights. That could be facilitated by Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and the return of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons to their homes and properties. He called on Israel to afford the Palestinians the opportunity to exercise their inalienable rights without delay.

27. As the Committee had stated in its first report, the question of Palestine was at the heart of the Middle East problem, and no solution in the Middle East could be envisaged that did not fully take into account the

legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. The Committee had also expressed the view that the United Nations had a historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of an independent Palestinian entity. Those observations remained as valid and relevant as they had been almost 30 years earlier.

28. The Non-Aligned Movement remained steadfast in its support for the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. It also wished to reaffirm its support for the work of the Committee. It looked forward to the day when Palestinians could fully exercise their inalienable rights in their own homeland, the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

29. **Mr. Kariyawasam** (Observer for Sri Lanka), speaking on behalf of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, said that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had achieved much over the past 30 years, despite the difficulties it had encountered. It had taken the lead in organizing and coordinating activities aimed at sensitizing the international community to the plight of the Palestinian people. He noted, in particular, the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held on 8 and 9 March 2005 in Geneva, which had had as its theme "Implementing the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: the role of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society".

30. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories was deeply concerned about the dire human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the occupied Syrian Golan. Among the contributing factors were the persistent Israeli presence in the occupied territories, notwithstanding the recent withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and the continuing construction of the wall with all its adverse effects on the daily lives of the Palestinians.

31. Over the years, the two Committees had sought to remind Israel of its international obligations. Unfortunately, Israel had yet to demonstrate that it had the political will to bring about real progress in the occupied territories. The two Committees must therefore pursue their efforts.

32. **Mr. Farhâdi** (Afghanistan) said that, over the past three decades, the Committee had had the task of making the voice of the Palestinian people heard and promoting the implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council concerning the question of Palestine and the rights of Palestinians. In that connection, his delegation was grateful for the support provided to the Committee by the Division for Palestinian Rights. It also appreciated Malta's participation in the Committee's work. The doors of the Committee must remain open to other European Union countries.

33. He noted with regret that the suffering of the Palestinian people not only continued but had grown worse with the construction of the illegal separation wall and the establishment of new Israeli settlements. It was therefore crucial for the Committee to continue its activities.

34. With regard to Jerusalem, few were aware that it was not only a Palestinian or an Arab question, but also an Islamic one.

35. It was to be hoped that the day would come when the Palestinian people would achieve its inalienable rights, including its right to self-determination and to an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. That was essential for peace in the Middle East and around the world.

36. **Mr. Hassan** (Observer for Jordan) expressed gratitude for the condolences offered for the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Amman. His Government condemned such terrorist, criminal acts. It would pursue its efforts to combat terrorism and bring the perpetrators of the attacks to justice.

37. **Mr. Requeijo Gual** (Cuba) noted that the Committee had been established by a resolution of the General Assembly, the most democratic and representative body in the United Nations. Accordingly, there could be no question as to its legitimacy. Its many achievements were reflected in its annual reports to the General Assembly. Regrettably, 30 years after its establishment, the need for its

activities persisted. Indeed, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people continued to be violated on a daily basis. The Palestinians were victims of a double standard with respect to the defence of human rights, with some States taking the position that their rights were not as important as those of other peoples. A number of countries even wished to abolish the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, as if those bodies belonged to a distant past. Until the Palestinians achieved their inalienable rights, the Committee must continue to support their just struggle, so that one day they could establish a free, independent, sovereign Palestinian State in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

38. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) expressed appreciation for all the condolences expressed on the occasion of the first anniversary of Mr. Yasser Arafat's death, and for the Committee's continued support for the struggle of the Palestinian people. He thanked all the members and observers for their tireless efforts in advancing the cause of Palestine. He looked forward to the day when Palestine would no longer need the help of members of the Committee but would join hands with them in order to help other suffering nations.

Request by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer

39. **The Chairman** announced that, in a note verbale dated 5 August 2005, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had expressed a wish to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer. That country had always been a firm supporter of the Committee's objectives, and he was confident that the Committee would welcome its participation as an observer. He suggested that the Committee should accede to the request.

40. *It was so decided.*

41. **Ms. Taj El Dine** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) thanked the Committee on behalf of her country's Permanent Representative who was, regrettably, unable to attend himself. She expressed her country's pride at being invited to participate in the Committee's work in the noble cause of promoting the rights of the Palestinian people, such as the right to self-determination and all the other rights embodied in the Charter of the United Nations which the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would continue to defend, nationally and internationally, as the basis for a true peace in the Middle East. She expressed her country's full support for the Committee's activities.

42. **The Chairman** asked the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to convey to the Permanent Representative and to President Chavez the Committee's gratitude for the principled position which their country had always taken on Palestine and for its decision to participate in the work of the Committee.

Consideration of draft resolutions on the question of Palestine

43. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the texts of four draft resolutions to be submitted to the General Assembly under agenda item 37. They had been discussed and approved by the Bureau, which recommended them for approval by the Committee. The draft resolutions were similar to those adopted on the item the previous year, but they had been updated to reflect the recent developments on the ground and in the peace process, and a number of substantive, as well as editorial and technical, changes had been made.

44. There were no substantive changes in the first three draft resolutions on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to approve those three draft resolutions.

45. *It was so decided.*

46. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that some substantive, as well as editorial and technical, changes had been made in the fourth draft resolution, on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In that connection, he drew attention to the eighteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth preambular paragraphs and to paragraphs 5, 6, 8, 10 and 15. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to approve the draft resolution.

47. *It was so decided.*

Accreditation of civil society organizations to the Committee

48. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the document entitled Working Paper No. 4, which contained applications from seven non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the Committee. The Bureau, assisted by the Division for Palestinian Rights, had reviewed the applications and concluded that the organizations concerned fulfilled the established criteria for accreditation. He therefore took it that the Committee wished to approve the applications.

49. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

50. **The Chairman** announced that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would be observed on Tuesday, 29 November 2005. In view of the importance attached to that annual event, he requested all member and observer delegations to be present at the ambassadorial level. He also urged all members and observers to participate actively in the debate on agenda item 37 "Questions of Palestine" in the plenary Assembly.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.